

SOMETHING NEW IS COMING – THE NATIONAL MEDICAL SUPPORT NOTICE

Starting March 22, 2004, DCS will be using a new form to enforce medical support obligations. This form is called the National Medical Support Notice, or NMSN, which all states must now use.

If you have questions about the National Medical Support Notice, you can get help in one or more of the following ways:

- Contact the DCS Employer Hotline at 1-800-591-2760
- Contact the DCS field office which issued the NMSN
- Find different types of information on the NMSN page of the DCS internet web site at <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/dcs/nmsn.shtml>
- Attend a DCS Employer Workshop (go to our web site at <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/dcs/employerworkshop.shtml> for information)

How is the new notice (the NMSN) different from the old notice?

- The NMSN is a **two part form** (Part A for the employer and Part B for the plan administrator)
- Your **response time** may be **longer**
- If the employee isn't already enrolled in a health insurance plan, the employee may be **involuntarily enrolled**
- Sometimes the **employee's premium** is included in "our" 50% of disposable income

We don't provide health insurance for any of our employees, so what do I do with the NMSN?

Just check the appropriate box on the Response form and send it back to DCS.

The employee is enrolled in health insurance already. What do I do about coverage for the children?

Assuming that there's no problem with the 50% withholding limit, enroll the children in the same health insurance plan right away. Under state law, you don't have to wait for open enrollment.

The employee is not enrolled in a health insurance plan, so how can I enroll the children?

The NMSN requires that, if the employee is eligible, you must enroll the employee and the children in a health insurance plan. If there is more than one plan available, provide that information to DCS and we'll decide how to proceed.

When I'm withholding from the employee's paycheck, what if the child support amount plus the health insurance premiums exceed 50% of the employee's net disposable income?

- You will almost always get the NMSN together with an Order/Notice to Withhold Income for Child Support (an "OWI"), so you will be asked to withhold child support plus health insurance premiums.
- You should start withholding for child support payments immediately.
- If the combined amounts of child support and health insurance premiums exceed 50% of the employee's net disposable income, contact DCS. Sometimes we may be able to adjust the amount of withholding for back child support so that the health insurance premiums fit within the 50% limit.
- On the **Response** form for the NMSN, check Box #4.
- **What withholding amounts for health insurance premiums count as part of the 50% limit?**

The answer to this question depends on whether the employee was already enrolled in a health insurance plan when you received the NMSN:

- If the employee was already enrolled, only the premium amounts to cover the children are part of the 50% limit. The employee's premium comes out of the employee's 50%.
- If the NMSN caused you to enroll the employee involuntarily, then the employee's premium and the children's premium are both included in the 50% limit.

DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS? CONTACT THE DCS EMPLOYER OMBUDSMAN

To assist employers asked to withhold earnings for child support, the DSHS Division of Child Support (DCS) has established an Employer Ombudsman within the agency's Community Relations Unit.

Employers who have questions regarding withholding or health insurance may reach the DCS Employer Ombudsman by email or by phone:

- Send email to dc-cru@dshs.wa.gov
- Call the Employer Hotline toll-free at 1-800-591-2760

DCS employees recognize the burden employers bear and how you assist us with the child support enforcement effort. We are committed to working with employers to help reduce this burden while still meeting legal requirements.

Thank you for helping DCS help children – we couldn't do it without you!